

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANAGU 00990 012215Z
ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 0990

STADIS////////////////////////////////

EXDIS

EYES ONLY FOR AMB. MAURICIO SOLAUN, ARA/CEN

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, NU
SUBJECT: USMILGP MOVE TO U.S. EMBASSY

1. THIS IS COL. FIRSE'S MEMO TO YOU WITH OUR COMMENTS:

2. QUOTE. WE FEEL THAT THE ORDER TO RELOCATE THE OFFICES OF THE MILGP TO THE PREMISES OF THE US EMBASSY MAY HAVE BEEN A BIT HASTY AND PREMATURE. ALTHOUGH LOCATING THE OFFICES IN THE EMBASSY WOULD FACILITATE DAILY CONTACT WITH EMBASSY PERSONNEL, THERE ARE MANY NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF SUCH A DECISION.

(OUR COMMENT: THE SUBJECT OF RELOCATING THE MILGP WITHIN THE EMBASSY WAS DISCUSSED BY THE AMBASSADOR AND ASST SECY TODMAN IN SAN JOSE IN LATE JANUARY. THE ASST SECY SUPPORTED THE MOVE AND, INDEED, IT HAS ALREADY BEEN ACCOMPLISHED IN MANY POSTS AROUND THE WORLD.)

3. A MOVE FROM OUR PRESENT LOCATION WOULD IMPACT ON OUR DAILY CONTACT WITH MEMBERS OF THE GUARDIA NACIONAL. UNDER THE PRESENT SET-UP, THEY ARE FREE TO COME AND GO IN THE CONDUCT OF ROUTINE BUSINESS, TESTING, INTERVIEWS, ETC. THIS HIGHLY VISIBLE TRAFFIC OF UNIFORMED MILITARY PERSONNEL THROUGH THE EMBASSY COULD PROJECT AN ERRONEOUS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MANAGU 00990 012215Z

PICTURE OF A MORE INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GUARDIA NACIONAL THAN THERE ACTUALLY EXISTS. THIS VISIBILITY COULD BE INTERPRETED AS AN INCREASE IN THE RELATIONSHIP RATHER THAN A DECREASE IN SUPPORT OF THE GUARDIA.

(OUR COMMENT: THIS IS A VALID AND SENSITIVE POINT WHICH REQUIRES ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION AMONG THE COUNTRY TEAM UPON AMBASSADOR'S RETURN.)

4. THE MILGP'S EFFECTIVENESS IN THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE GUARDIA WOULD BE SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED IF WE WITHDREW. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NEVER BEEN CHARGED WITH THIS ROLE, OUR HISTORICAL RELATIONSHIP OF CLOSE TIES COULD AID THE TRANSITION IF WE REMAIN IN PLACE. (OUR COMMENT: WE WOULD HAVE TO CONSIDER VARIOUS OPTIONS IF THE MILGP WERE IN THE FUTURE TO BE CHARGED WITH AIDING IN THE "INSTITUTIONALIZATION" PROCESS OF THE GN.)

5. VACATING OUR PRESENT FACILITIES WOULD SEND TOO STRONG A SIGNAL TO THE GOVERNMENT. IT VIOLATES A POLICY OF GRADUATED RESPONSE. WE HAVE RECENTLY CUT THE MILGP BY 50 PCT AND IT HAS BEEN REVEALED THAT FMS CREDIT FOR FY-79 HAS BEEN CUT TO ZERO, DESPITE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS PICTURE. THIS MOVE WOULD BE ANOTHER "SLAP IN THE FACE" OF THE GOVERNMENT (OUR COMMENT: THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THIS WOULD BE A STRONG SIGNAL TO THE GON. WHETHER OR NOT IT WOULD BE TOO STRONG A RESPONSE DEPENDS ON MANY POLITICAL FACTORS AND SHOULD BE A SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION.)

6. IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT, IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE, TO MONITOR GN DAILY ACTIVITIES AND TO CONFIRM OR DENY ALLEGED ABUSES OF HUMAN RIGHTS. (OUR COMMENT: TO DATE THE MILGP HAS NOT ENGAGED IN MONITORING, CONFIRMING OR DENYING HUMAN RIGHTS PERFORMANCE ALTHOUGH IT HAS PROVIDED INFORMATION WHICH HAS HELPED TO EXPLAIN GN ORDERS, AND DISCIPLINE.)

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PAGE 03 MANAGU 00990 012215Z

7. FOLLOWING THE EARTHQUAKE OF 1972, THE SEPARATE MILGP COMMUNICATIONS

FACILITIES WERE THE FOCAL POINT FOR DISASTER RELIEF. EMBASSY FACILITIES WERE RENDERED USELESS. IN THE EVENT OF A FUTURE DISASTER, AN ALTERNATE COMMANDER CENTER WOULD BE INVALUABLE. (OUR COMMENT: THE OLD CHANCERY WAS SITUATED ON A SEISMIC FAULT LINE AND ITS COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY WAS DESTROYED WITH THE BUILDING. THE CURRENT EMBASSY IS BELIEVED TO BE ON FAULT-FREE TERRAIN. AN ALTERNATE COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED AT THE EMBASSY RESIDENCE. USMILGP CAN MAINTAIN ITS INTEGRAL COMMUNICATIONS ON THE CHANCERY COMPOUND.)

8. SEPARATE FACILITIES AT THE AIRPORT PROVIDE AN OFFICE FOR THE MAC STATION MANAGER AND A FOCAL POINT FOR ALL ACTIVITIES AT THE AIRPORT INCLUDING DIRECT CONTACT WITH SEARCH AND RESCUE FACILITIES. THE OFFICE IS NECESSARY DUE TO THE REMOTE LOCATION OF THE AIRPORT. (OUR COMMENT: SEPARATE FACILITIES AT THE AIRPORT SERVE A USEFUL PURPOSE AND SHOULD BE MAINTAINED IN ANY EVENT.)

9. MOVE IS NOT COST EFFECTIVE SINCE THE GON PRESENTLY PAYS FOR UTILITIES, TELEPHONE COMMUNICATIONS, SERVICES, SECRETARIAL HELP AND DRIVER PERSONNEL. COSTS WOULD BE ABSORBED BY U.S. EMBASSY.

(OUR COMMENT: CURRENT BILATERAL AGREEMENTS STIPULATE THAT THE GON WILL REIMBURSE THE USG FOR CERTAIN OPERATING COSTS; THAT SYSTEM SHOULD COVER THE MILGP NOT MATTER WHERE LOCATED.)

10. BRAZIL HAS OFFERED A 30-MAN MISSION TO REPLACE THE U.S. MISSION. ARGENTINA ALSO WAS INTERESTED AT ONE TIME IN ESTABLISHING A MISSION HERE. THE PRESENT AGREEMENT SPECIFICALLY PROHIBITS ANOTHER MISSION. IF WE MOVE TO EMBASSY LOCATION AND FORM ODC, THE BILATERAL AGREEMENT WOULD BE TERMINATED, ALLOWING OTHER COUNTRIES TO ESTABLISH MISSIONS HERE.

(OUR COMMENT: AS WE READ THE VARIOUS USG-GON SECURITY ASSISTANCE BILATERALS A MOVE TO THE CHANCERY WOULD NOT, OF ITSELF, TERMINATE ANY OR ALL OF THEM. ANY MOVE BY THE GON TO ACCEPT A MISSION FROM ANOTHER COUNTRY WOULD, HOWEVER, BE A CLEAR VIOLATION OF THE TERMS OF CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 MANAGU 00990 012215Z

AN EXISTING AGREEMENT. THE LEGAL ISSUES HERE MAY MERIT CAREFUL ANALYSIS BY STATE AND DEFENSE LEGAL EXPERTS.)

11. ANY CHANGE IN MILGP COMPOSITION OR LOCATION SHOULD BE HELD IN ABEYANCE PENDING STATE/DOD DEFINITION OF TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR MILGP/MAAGS. IF OUR ROLE CHANGES SIGNIFICANTLY, I.E., DELETION OF ADVISORY ROLE, THEN REDUCTION TO 3 MAN DOD AND MOVE TO EMBASSY WOULD BE A NATURAL AND JUSTIFIED CHANGE. PRESENTLY, THE GON IS ESSENTIALLY FULFILLING OUR OBJECTIVES RELATING TO REGIONAL SECURITY. WE SHOULD SEEK OTHER METHODS OF SIGNALING U.S. POLICY. END QUOTE.

(OUR COMMENT: TERMS OF REFERENCE ARE NOW AVAILABLE (STATE 047743) AND EMPHASIZE MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTING ROLE WHILE DOWNPLAYING ADVISORY AND REPRESENTATIONAL ACTIVITIES.
RUBENSTEIN

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